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House of Representatives

STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN ED CASE OF HAWAII SEPTEMBER 21, 2005

THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF HAWAII COUNTY ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL

I rise proudly to join many others in offering my heartiest congratulations to the Hawaii County Economic Opportunity Council (HCEOC) on the occasion of its 40th anniversary on November 18, 2005.

Over these last four decades, HCEOC has epitomized the letter and spirit of economic opportunity envisioned by President John F. Kennedy and others. It has lifted two whole generations now of Big Islanders up and into lives of productive contributions and economic self-sufficiency, in the process advancing and enriching all of our Hawaii.

HCEOC has done so by providing good employment opportunities to those in need and by delivering to our Hawaii Island community with loyal and continued patronage for goods and services. Countless families, friends and neighbors have benefited directly from its programs, which include child development, education, housing, energy assistance, transportation services, and economic development projects.

Additionally, HCEOC has taken a leadership role in mentoring our Big Island youth and keeping them out of trouble and away from the scourge of drugs that has ravaged too many. HCEOC's after-school program, for example, has helped more than 4,000 students while unbelievably seeing only eight drop out. Not a single enrolled student has ever been arrested for drugs

during or after his or her participation in the program.

Much of HCEOC's success is owed to its wonderful and dedicated staff, particularly its long-time executive director, George Yokoyama.

George, indomitably optimistic and colorfully individual, has dedicated himself tirelessly and loyally over a long and illustrious career to help those too often forgotten or marginalized.

George's deep commitment to his community is an inspiration to us all, and I know that I speak for all of us in thanking him for all he has done for our Hawaii.